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## ATG Familiar Faces

Editor

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- Put descriptions of databases online [we do somewhat].
- Too many broken links to Websites.
- Too many clicks are required to view my circulation record [we require users to authenticate].
- [an alum complained] I want access to all the databases, not just the ones to which **Circle of Friends** organization members are entitled.
- Three color copies made from e-journals are not as good as the printed journals.

The first two of these complaints express the difficulties that many of our users are experiencing with their digital library. When there were mainly printed books and a few electronic databases we were all excited. Now that we are buried in e-content, many users are drowning in digital ink. Having said that, an equally loud demand is for more digital ink in the form of more eBooks, more e-journals, more e-journal back runs, etc. Other complaints refer to simple, but still frustrating, technical problems: I need a better mouse, my bandwidth is too slow, your catalog isn't nice like **Amazon.com's**, I hate bro-

ken links, and the color copies aren't good enough. Since we developed an e-package for alumni access [titles for which licensing permission has been secured], we have received numerous complaints that we have disenfranchised them compared to the access they enjoyed as students. Many of these problems can be solved, but they result in some patrons feeling like the one who simply stated: "I feel frustrated all the time."

Some of the other complaints reflect the new level of expectations that the current Web generation, steeped in instant gratification, possess:

- I want the catalog to tell me what floor, row, and shelf my book is on.
- Translate western European books into English.
- Why can't your Hong Kong materials catalog include references to materials at the Public Records Office, the Historical Museum, etc.?
- You need to catalog all the articles in anthologies, catalog all the titles in e-journal databases [we do mostly].
- You pick up and deliver books from libraries at other universities, why not from other branch libraries on our own campus? I don't want to have to come to campus to return my books, please set up re-

turn boxes at all the extension centers in the city.

Twenty-five years ago I would complain that students simply wanted to know where the pencil sharpener, drinking fountain, and rest rooms were - but this generation seems to have higher expectations (in addition to drinking fountains and rest rooms). The last comment in the list just above relates to another phenomena in higher education today: More life long learners who have personal needs that conflict with library rules. They come into our library after 9 PM at night once classes are over, rush around gathering books and making photocopies to supplement what they find online, but subsequently are emailed that they need to return a book or get fined — and that is not a day on which they have a class. A student's life is simply not easy.

So, are Hong Kong students different in their library demands? I don't think so. Globalism produced our collection of skyscrapers amidst green mountains and the lives of our students are quite similar to those of their counter parts on the other side of the Pacific. The survey also suggests that while many of the problems encountered by students in libraries are the same as decades past, we are indeed already in the digital future. 🌱

## ATG Familiar Faces

*These photos were taken at **Book News Inc.'s Open House** aboard the private rail cars **Tamalpais** and **Silver Iris**, Union Station, San Diego, CA on Saturday, January 10, 2004. **Book News Inc.** publishes **SciTech Book News** and **Reference & Research Book News**. Photos were provided by **Lyman Newlin**.*



**Top Left Photo: Lyman Newlin** (Book Trade Counselor, Lewiston, NY) and **Thyra Russell** (Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL)



**Bottom Left Photo: Tom Leonhardt** (St. Edward's University, Austin, TX)

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**Pictured Above: Kathy Gullette** (*Book News*), **Richard Ring** (University Kansas Library) and **Julie Brinkman** (Linda Hall Library, Kansas City, MO)



**Pictured Above: Irv Rockwood** (Editor, *Choice*) and **Jane Erskin** (Editor, *Book News*)